



Speech By  
**Hon. Mark Furner**


**MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE**

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Record of Proceedings, 21 August 2024

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Ekka**

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (10.00 am): The 2024 Ekka, although beset by rains, was a great success. I know that many in this House spent time at the Ekka and 345,000 Queenslanders passed through the gates. I thank President Justice David Thomas and CEO Brendan Christou for another spectacular Ekka. Ekka also saw the launch of the DAF bred strawberry, the Stella, named after the late Stella Young, with 85 per cent of strawberries grown in Queensland and more than 50 per cent nationally being DAF bred. Ekka always needs strawberries and strawberry sundaes.

For the farming sectors, Ekka is a key opportunity to showcase the diversity of agriculture. This includes internationally with industry promoting the sector to: China's Consul General Dr Ruan Zongze, who was able to experience the great food, fibre and foliage that was on display; Jo Martin, 'Queen Bee' of the Queensland Beekeepers' Association, who was a hive of activity and a sweet success; Brendan Taylor of AgForce Grains, who assisted in highlighting sorghum to the Consul General—it was also a special year for AgForce on their 25th year as a peak body for agriculture—Michael Murray from Cotton Australia, who was threading the importance of fibre and cotton in everyday life; and Eric Danzi of eastAUSmilk with the fake cow milking demonstration gave a few cheesy moments. Of course, there was also Jo Sheppard and QFF with their advocacy and celebration of agriculture event, and the member for Bancroft stood in for me at that event. I appreciate the member doing that during my time of illness.

The Queensland government DAF stall was tremendously popular with keen interest in what role the government plays with regard to growers, fishers, forestry, biosecurity and everyday Queenslanders. The Rural Press Club breakfast is always a key highlight of any Ekka, and David Harris of AACo gave a great overview of the industry and the role that this 200-year-old company plays in the industry. We announced at the DAF stand at the Ekka stronger measures to assist our farmers, which continues the Miles government support that backs in our farmers. As the agricultural sector knows, it is only the Miles government that is doing what matters for Queensland farmers.